







FIG. 3

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR DYNAMICALLY COUPLING A SPECIAL NUMBER CALL WITH A FUNCTION-FOCUSED ANSWERING UNIT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation from Provisional U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 61/594,604, entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR DYNAMICALLY COUPLING A SPECIAL NUMBER CALL WITH A FUNCTION-FOCUSED ANSWERING UNIT," filed on Feb. 3, 2012, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to telecommunication systems, and especially to coupling a special number call with at least one function-focused call recipient during the special number call.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Special Number calls may be placed using a variety of mobile communication devices. By way of example and not by way of limitation, special number calls may be placed using land line telephones using a Plain Old Telephone System (POTS), Internet Protocol (IP) phones, mobile telephones, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) devices, "Smart" phones, automatic crash notification (ACN) units, mobile radio devices and other communication devices.

A special number call may involve a specialized need that may be best addressed by a function-focused specialized responder. By way of example and not by way of limitation, a special number call reporting a wildfire may be best fielded by a firefighters' command center, an accident related with a traffic jam pursuant to a football game may best be addressed by a university police command center and during a presidential visit all special service calls within a projected movement zone for the President may best be handled by the US Secret Service (USSS). Some responders may maintain function-focused answering units that may be communicatively coupled to handle a special number call requiring function-focused assistance.

Changing locations, conditions, services sought by the call or other circumstances may require that the routing of the special number call may need to be reevaluated so that coupling with new or additional function-focused entities may need to be effected during the special number call.

Examples of such special number calls are 9-1-1 calls for seeking emergency services and other abbreviated number calls for non-emergency special services, such as "N-1-1" systems. Examples of such N-1-1 systems include "3-1-1" (urgent but not emergency calls) and "5-1-1" (traffic inquiry calls). Special number calls may also include, by way of further example and not by way of limitation, abbreviated numbers for calling commercial services, such as "*820" (calling a radio station) or "GOTIX" (calling for tickets).

For purposes of illustration, by way of example and not by way of limitation, the present invention will be described in the context of an emergency service network in the United States, commonly referred to as a 9-1-1 network. The teachings of the present invention are equally applicable, useful and novel in other special number calling systems, such as

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maintenance service networks, college campus security networks, abbreviated number networks for calling commercial services and other networks.

A user engaged in a 9-1-1 call seeking emergency services relies on an emergency service call taker or receiver, such as an operator at a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP; sometimes referred to as a Public Safety Answering Position), to marshal appropriate and sufficient assets to handle an extant emergency situation. Such marshalling is often best carried out by conferring with asset holders, such as first responders (e.g., fire, police and emergency personnel) and the like. Direct communications among an emergency service caller and responding agencies rather than relaying information among participants can be an effective and efficient mode of operation for handling a situation.

Direct involvement by specialized responders may be especially advantageous when a function-focused entity is involved in the call so that their special expertise can be brought to bear early on in the situation giving rise to the call. The PSAP may bridge the call to the function-focused entity, may reroute the call to the function-focused entity, may establish a conference call arrangement whereby the PSAP and the function-focused entity both remain on the line or may otherwise include the function-focused entity in the call.

It may be advantageous to carry out the coupling by, for example, rerouting or bridging at a network switching facility. Network switching facilities may include, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a Mobile Switching Center (MSC) coupled with a radio access network or an unlicensed mobile access network, or an End Office (EO) coupled with a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

Dynamic routing or bridging or other coupling to a function-focused answering unit is particularly advantageous in that dynamic re-coupling may be carried out in a manner that does not break the connection with the caller and permits re-coupling of the caller with the function-focused answering unit without the caller having to redial the call.

There is a need for a system and method for dynamically coupling a special number call with a function-focused answering unit. For purposes of this description, the term "dynamic coupling" means coupling that may be carried out in a manner that does not break a connection between a caller and a first call recipient and permits re-coupling of the caller with at least one second call recipient without the caller having to redial the call.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A system for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit includes: (a) at least one of an unlicensed mobile access network, a radio access network, and a public switched telephone network configured and situated for communicative coupling with the calling unit; (b) at least one network switching facility coupled with at least one of the unlicensed mobile access network, the radio access network and the public switched telephone network; and (c) a special number call receiving facility coupled with the at least one network switching facility; at least one of the special number call receiving facility and the at least one network switching facility being configured for effecting communicative coupling of the special number call with the at least one function-focused answering unit. After receiving the special number call, the special number call receiving facility effects dynamically coupling the special number call to one or more included function-focused answering unit of the at least one function-focused answering unit. Determining which function-foc-

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cused answering unit of the at least one function-focused answering unit is an included function-focused answering unit is made at the special number call receiving facility.

A method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit includes: (a) receiving the special number call at a special number call receiving facility via a network switching facility; (b) if location information relating to locus of the calling unit is received with the special number call, proceeding to step (d); (c) if no location information relating to locus of the calling unit is received with the special number call, obtaining the location information from a location determining facility coupled with at least one of the network switching facility and the special number call receiving facility; (d) evaluating service required by caller placing the special number call; (e) evaluating location of one or more included function-focused answering unit of the at least one function-focused answering unit; (f) coupling the special number call with one or more included function-focused answering unit of the at least one function-focused answering unit; (g) if treatment necessitated by the special number call is complete, proceed to step (k); (h) if treatment necessitated by the special number call is not complete, in no particular order: (1) determining whether a change in the treatment has occurred; and (2) determining whether a change in the locus has occurred; (i) if a change has occurred in the treatment or in the locus, repeating steps (d) through (h); (j) if no change has occurred in the treatment or in the locus, repeating steps (g) through (h); and (k) terminating the method.

It is, therefore, a feature of the present invention to provide a system and method for dynamically coupling a special number call with a function-focused answering unit.

Further features of the present invention will be apparent from the following specification and claims when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which like elements are labeled using like reference numerals in the various figures, illustrating the preferred embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of a system for effecting the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating call routing for a system configured according to the teaching of the present invention deployed in a representative multi-network arrangement.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating the method of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

For purposes of illustration, by way of example and not by way of limitation, the present invention will be discussed in the context of an emergency service network in the United States, commonly referred to as an E9-1-1 network. The teachings of the present invention are equally applicable, useful and novel in other special number calling systems, such as maintenance service networks, college campus security networks and other networks.

In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. However, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known methods, procedures, components and circuits have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the present invention.

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When the terms “coupled” and “connected”, along with their derivatives, are used herein, it should be understood that these terms are not intended as synonyms for each other. Rather, in particular embodiments, “connected” is used to indicate that two or more elements are in direct physical or electrical contact with each other. “Coupled” is used to indicate that two or more elements are in either direct or indirect (with other intervening elements between them) physical or electrical contact with each other, or that the two or more elements co-operate or interact with each other (e.g., as in a cause-and-effect relationship).

FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of a system for effecting the present invention. In FIG. 1, a telecommunication system 10 includes an Unlicensed Mobile Access (UMA) Network (UMAN) 12, a Radio Access Network (RAN) 14 and a Plain Old Telephone System (POTS) network 70.

UMAN 12 may be embodied in, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a Wi-Fi network, a Bluetooth network or another type of UMAN. RAN 14 may be embodied in, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a cellular network or a Personal Communication System (PCS) network employing any of several communication protocols including, by way of further example and not by way of limitation, GSM or another protocol using Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) or another coding scheme. UMAN 12 and RAN 14 are configured for wireless communication with a wireless calling unit or instrument 16. Wireless calling unit 16 may be embodied in a wireless calling device including, by way of example and not by way of limitation, mobile telephone, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) devices, “Smart” phones, automatic crash notification (ACN) units, mobile radio devices and similar communication devices.

UMAN 12 includes an access unit 20 coupled with an Internet Protocol (IP) access network 22. Access unit 20 facilitates communication between wireless communicating unit 16 and IP network 22. IP network 22 is coupled with a UMA Network Controller (UNC) 24. UNC 24 is coupled with a Mobile Switching Center (MSC) 30. MSC 30 is coupled with a communication network 32. Communication network 32 is coupled with a PSAP 34. MSC 30 is also coupled with a location center 36.

As may be understood by those skilled in the art of communication system design, a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone could be coupled in any of networks 12, 14, 70 to advantage and could benefit from the present invention. A representative VoIP phone 21 is illustrated in FIG. 1 as coupled within UMAN 12. Specifically, VoIP phone 21 is indicated as being coupled with one or both of access unit 20 and IP network 22.

PSAP 34 may be coupled with MSC 30 via an IP network 38 to permit communication between PSAP 34 and MSC 30 without involving communication network 32. PSAP 34 may be directly coupled with location center 36 via a direct connection 37 to permit communication between PSAP 34 and location center 36 without traversing an intervening network.

RAN 14 includes an access unit 40 that includes a radio antenna embodied in a radio tower 42 and a Base Transceiver Station (BTS) 44 coupled with radio tower 42. BTS 44 is coupled with a private network 46. Private network 46 may be embodied in, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a cellular network or a PCS network employing any of several communication protocols including, by way of further example and not by way of limitation, GSM or another protocol using Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) or another coding scheme. Access unit 40 facilitates communication between

wireless communicating unit **16** and private network **46**. Private network **46** is coupled with a Base Station Controller (BSC) **48**. BSC **48** is coupled with MSC **30**.

POTS **70** includes a land line telephone unit **72** coupled with a PSTN **74**. PSTN **74** is coupled with an End Office (EO) **76** and EOP**76** is coupled with an E911 Tandem switch **78**. 911 tandem switch **78** is coupled with PSAP **34**.

At least one of MSC **30**, EO **78** and PSAP **34** is coupled for selectively communicating with various function-focused entities **50** such as, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a fire agency **52**, an emergency medical service (EMS) **54**, the forestry service **56**, the US Secret Service **58**, a University Police Command Center **60**, other PSAPs **62** and other function-focused entities **64**. Any of PSAP **34**, MSC **30**, E911 tandem **78** and EO **76** may be communicatively coupled with function-focused entities **50** via IP network **38**, via communication network **32**, via location center **36** or via another network. Such alternate connections and networks are understood by those skilled in the art of telecommunication system design, but are not shown in FIG. **1** in order to avoid cluttering FIG. **1**.

Equipment and support for providing dynamic coupling of a call with a function-focused entity **50** may be situated at PSAP **34**. Alternatively or additionally, equipment and support for providing dynamic coupling of a call with a function-focused entity **50** may be situated in MSC **30**, or EO **78** or both of MSC **30**, EO **78**. Situating equipment and support in one or both of MSC **30**, EO **78** may be a cost effective configuration to avoid the cost of providing equipment and support for providing dynamic coupling of calls with function-focused entities **50** in each of several PSAPs that may be coupled with and supported by MSC **30**, EO **78**. In any configuration, it is likely that PSAP **34** will be in the best operational position to decide whether to couple (e.g., by bridging or routing) an emergency service call to a function-focused entity **50**. This is so because PSAP **34** likely has the first-available information relating to the nature of the situation occasioning the placing of the emergency service call. The nature of the situation occasioning the placing of the emergency service call likely will drive any decision whether to involve a function-focused entity **50** and, if so, which function-focused entity or entities to involve.

Calling unit **16** may wirelessly access UMAN **12** to place an emergency 9-1-1 call via access unit **20** to establish communication with PSAP **34** via IP network **22**, UNC **24**, MSC **30** and one or both of communication network **32** and IP network **38**.

VoIP phone **21** may access UMAN **12** to place an emergency 9-1-1 call via access unit **20** and IP network **22** (or may directly access IP network **22**) to establish communication with PSAP **34** via UNC **24**, and MSC **30**.

Calling unit **16** may instead wirelessly access RAN **14** to place an emergency 9-1-1 call via BTS **44** to establish communication with PSAP **34** via BSC **48**, MSC **30** and one or both of communication network **32** and IP network **38**.

Telephone unit **72** (telephone unit **72** may also be referred to herein as a calling unit **72**) may access PSAP **34** via PSTN **74**, EO **76** and E911 tandem **78**.

When communication is established between a calling unit **16**, **21**, **72** and PSAP **34**, PSAP **34** may inquire of calling unit **16**, **21**, **72** or inquire of a user of calling unit **16**, **21**, **72** regarding the circumstance or circumstances that are the occasion for the call. PSAP **34**, or an operator or evaluator manning PSAP **34** can evaluate or triage the situation described by calling unit **16**, **21**, **72** (e.g., in the case of an ACN unit) or a user of calling unit **16**, **21**, **72** and may be able to identify the nature of the circumstances.

PSAP **34** or an operator or evaluator manning PSAP **34** can also inquire of the caller as to the locus of the caller, or the location may be ascertained using other means such as, by way of example and not by way of limitation, Global Positioning System (GSM) satellite information accompanying the call signal and cell-and-tower information or other information obtained involving location center **36**.

Once the caller's locus or a special nature of an occasion for the call is determined, PSAP **34** or an operator or evaluator manning PSAP **34** may determine that certain of function-focused entities **50** should be involved in the call to aid in coordinating assistance rendered in response to the call. Communications may be established by PSAP **34**, by MSC **30**, by EO **76** by cooperation between PSAP **34** and MSC **30** or between PSAP **34** and EO **76**, or via another arrangement so that appropriate function-focused entities **50** may be included function-focused entities participating in the emergency service call originally placed to PSAP **34**. Preferably PSAP **34** may control which function-focused entities **50** remain involved in the emergency service call. PSAP **34** or an operator or evaluator manning PSAP **34** may change participants in the call during the call as necessary such as when assistance requirements, caller locus or other circumstances change. A voice link between calling unit **16**, **72** and the first-connected party to the call, such as PSAP **34**, may remain a priority connection throughout the duration of the emergency service call.

FIG. **2** is a schematic diagram illustrating call routing for a system configured according to the teaching of the present invention deployed in a representative multi-network arrangement. In FIG. **2**, a telecommunication system **110** includes an Unlicensed Mobile Access (UMA) Network (UMAN) **112**, a Radio Access Network (RAN) **114** and a Plain Old Telephone System (POTS) network **170**.

UMAN **112** may include, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a Wi-Fi network, a Bluetooth network or another type of UMAN. RAN **114** may include, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a cellular network or a Personal Communication System (PCS) network employing any of several communication protocols including, by way of further example and not by way of limitation, GSM or another protocol using Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) or another coding scheme. UMAN **112** and RAN **114** are configured for wireless communication with a wireless calling unit or instrument **116**.

UMAN **112** includes access units **120₁**, **120₂**, **120₃**, **120_m** coupled for call routing via an Internet Protocol (IP) network (not shown in FIG. **2**; see IP network **22**, FIG. **1**). The indicator "m" is employed to signify that there can be any number of access units in telecommunication system **110**. The inclusion of four access units **120₁**, **120₂**, **120₃**, **120_m** in FIG. **2** is illustrative only and does not constitute any limitation regarding the number of access units that may be included in a telecommunication system employing the present invention.

Access units **120₁**, **120₂**, **120₃**, **120_m** facilitate communication with a wireless communicating unit **116**. Calls from access units **120₁**, **120₂** may be placed with a UMA Network Controller (UNC) **124₁**. Calls from access units **120₃**, **120_m** may be placed with a UMA Network Controller (UNC) **124_s**. The indicator "s" is employed to signify that there can be any number of UNC's in telecommunication system **110**. The inclusion of two UNC's **124₁**, **124_s** in FIG. **2** is illustrative only and does not constitute any limitation regarding the number of UNC's that may be included in a telecommunication system employing the present invention. UNC's **124₁**, **124_s** are coupled with a Mobile Switching Center (MSC) **130**. MSC

130 is coupled for call routing with a receiving or called party such as, by way of example and not by way of limitation, **PSAP 134** via a communication network (not shown in FIG. 2; see, e.g., communication network **32** or IP network **38**, FIG. 1). **MSC 130** is also coupled with a location center **136**.

As may be understood by those skilled in the art of communication system design, a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone could be coupled in any of networks **112**, **114**, **170** to advantage and could benefit from the present invention. A representative VoIP phone **121** is illustrated in FIG. 2 as coupled within **UMAN 112**. Specifically, VoIP phone **121** is indicated as being coupled with access unit **120_m**.

RAN 114 includes access units represented in FIG. 2 by Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) **144₁**, **144₂**, **144₃**, **144_n**. The indicator "n" is employed to signify that there can be any number of BTSs in telecommunication system **110**. The inclusion of four BTSs **144₁**, **144₂**, **144₃**, **144_n** in FIG. 2 is illustrative only and does not constitute any limitation regarding the number of BTSs that may be included in a telecommunication system employing the present invention.

BTSs **144₁**, **144₂**, **144₃**, **144_n** are coupled for call routing with **MCS 130** via a private network (not shown in FIG. 2; see private network **46**, FIG. 1). BTSs **144₁**, **144₂**, **144₃**, **144_n** facilitate communication with wireless communicating unit **116**. BTSs **144₁**, **144₂**, **144₃**, **144_n** are coupled with a Base Station Controllers (BSC) **148₁**, **148_n**. Calls from BTSs **144₁**, **144₂** may be placed with BSC **148₁**. Calls from BTSs **144₃**, **144_n** may be placed with a BSC **148_n**. The indicator "r" is employed to signify that there can be any number of BSCs in telecommunication system **110**. The inclusion of two BSCs **148₁**, **148_n** in FIG. 2 is illustrative only and does not constitute any limitation regarding the number of BSCs that may be included in a telecommunication system employing the present invention. BSCs **148₁**, **148_n** are coupled with **MSC 130**.

POTS 170 includes a land line telephone unit **172** coupled with **PSAP 134** via an End Office (EO) **176** and an E911 Tandem switch **178**.

At least one of **MSC 130**, **PSAP 134** and **EO 176** may be coupled for selectively communicating with various function-focused entities **150** such as, by way of example and not by way of limitation, a fire agency **152**, an emergency medical service (EMS) **154**, the forestry service **156**, the US Secret Service **158**, a University Police Command Center **160**, other **PSAPs 162** and other function-focused entities **164**.

Calling unit **116** may wirelessly access **UMAN 112** to place an emergency 9-1-1 call via an access unit **120₁**, **120₂**, **120₃**, **120_m** to establish communication with **PSAP 134** via a **UNC 124₁**, **124_s** and **MSC 130**.

VoIP phone **121** (VoIP phone **121** may also be referred to herein as a calling unit **121**) may access **UMAN 112** to place an emergency 9-1-1 call via access unit **120_m** to establish communication with **PSAP 134** via **UNC 124_s** and **MSC 130**.

Calling unit **116** may instead wirelessly access **RAN 114** to place an emergency 9-1-1 call via a BTS **144₁**, **144₂**, **144₃**, **144_n** to establish communication with **PSAP 134** via a BSC **148₁**, **148_n** and **MSC 130**.

Telephone unit **172** (telephone unit **172** may also be referred to herein as a calling unit **172**) may access **PSAP 134** via **EO 176** and **E911 tandem 178**.

When communication is established between a calling unit **116**, **121**, **172** and **PSAP 134**, **PSAP 134** may inquire of calling unit **116**, **121**, **172** or inquire of a user of calling unit **116**, **121**, **172** regarding the circumstance or circumstances that are the occasion for the call. **PSAP 134**, or an operator or evaluator manning **PSAP 134** can evaluate or triage the situation described by calling instrument **116**, **121**, **172** (e.g., in

the case of an **ACN** unit) or a user of calling unit **116**, **121**, **172** and may be able to identify the nature of the circumstances.

PSAP 134, or an operator or evaluator manning **PSAP 134** can also inquire of the caller as to the locus of the caller, or the location may be ascertained using other means such as, by way of example and not by way of limitation, Global Positioning System (GSM) satellite information accompanying the call signal and cell-and-tower information or other information obtained involving location center **136**.

Once the caller's locus is determined, **PSAP 134** or an operator or evaluator manning **PSAP 134** may determine that certain of function-focused entities **150** should be involved in the call to aid in coordinating assistance rendered in response to the call. Communications may be established by **PSAP 134**, by **MSC 130**, by cooperation between **PSAP 134** and **MSC 130** or via another arrangement so that appropriate function-focused entities **150** may be included via function-focused answering units associated with function-focused entities participating in the emergency service call originally placed to **PSAP 134**. Preferably **PSAP 134** may control which function-focused entities **150** remain involved in the emergency service call. **PSAP 134** or an operator or evaluator manning **PSAP 134** may change participants in the call during the call as assistance requirements, caller locus or other circumstances change. Preferably, a voice link between mobile unit **116** and the first-connected party to the call, such as **PSAP 134**, remains a priority connection throughout the duration of the emergency service call.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating the method of the present invention. In FIG. 3, a method **200** for substantially simultaneously routing a special number call from a calling unit to at least one function-focused answering unit associated with a function-focused entity begins at a **START** locus **202**.

Method **200** continues with receiving the special number call at a special number call receiving facility via a network switching facility, as indicated by a block **204**.

Method **200** continues with posing a query whether location information relating to locus of the calling unit is received with the special number call, as indicated by a query block **206**. If location information relating to locus of the calling unit is received with the special number call, method **200** proceeds from query block **206** via a **YES** response line **208** to evaluate service required by the caller placing the special number call, including determining which function-focused answering units may be available to assist and, based upon agency capabilities and location, and which function-focused answering units should be included in the special number call, as indicated by a block **214**.

If no location information relating to locus of the calling unit is received with the special number call, method **200** proceeds from query block **206** via a **NO** response line **210** to obtain location information relating to locus of the calling unit from a location determining facility coupled with at least one of the network switching facility and the special number call receiving facility, as indicated by a block **212**. Method **200** thereafter proceeds from block **212** to evaluate service required by the caller placing the special number call, including determining which function-focused answering units may be available to assist and, based upon function-focused answering units capabilities and location, and which function-focused answering units should be included in the special number call, as indicated by a block **214**.

Method **200** continues with routing the special number call to one or more included function-focused answering units of the at least one function-focused answering unit, as indicated by a block **216**.

Method **200** continues with posing a query whether the situation occasioning the special number call has been resolved, as indicated by a query block **218**. If the situation occasioning the special number call has been resolved, method **200** proceeds from query block **218** via a YES response line **220** and method **200** terminates, as indicated by an END locus **222**.

If the situation occasioning the special number call has not been resolved, method **200** proceeds from query block **218** via a NO response line **224** and, in no particular order, poses queries indicated by query blocks **226**, **234**. Only for purposes of illustration of method **200**, query block **226** first poses a query whether the locus of the calling unit has changed. If the locus of the calling unit has changed, method **200** proceeds from query block **226** via a YES response line **228** to a juncture **230**, and method **200** thereafter repeats steps indicated by blocks **214**, **216**, **218**, **226**.

If the locus of the calling unit has not changed, method **200** proceeds from query block **226** via a NO response line **232** and method **200** poses a query whether assistance required by the caller placing the special number call has changed, as indicated by a query block **234**. If assistance required by the caller placing the special number call has changed, method **200** proceeds from query block **234** via a YES response line **236** to juncture **230**, and method **200** thereafter repeats steps indicated by blocks **214**, **216**, **218**, **226**, **234**.

If assistance required by the caller placing the special number call has not changed, method **200** proceeds from query block **234** via a NO response line **238** and method **200** thereafter repeats the step indicated by block **218**.

It is to be understood that, while the detailed drawings and specific examples given describe embodiments of the invention, they are for the purpose of illustration only, that the system and method of the invention are not limited to the precise details and conditions disclosed and that various changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention which is defined by the following claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit; the method comprising:

- (a) receiving said special number call at a special number call receiving facility via a network switching facility;
- (b) if location information relating to locus of said calling unit is received with said special number call, proceeding to step (d);
- (c) if no location information relating to locus of said calling unit is received with said special number call, obtaining said location information from a location determining facility coupled with at least one of said network switching facility and said special number call receiving facility;
- (d) evaluating service required by caller placing said special number call;

- (e) determining which function-focused answering units are to be included in the special number call based upon function-focused answering unit capabilities and location;
- (f) coupling said special number call with one or more included function-focused answering units of said at least one function-focused answering unit;
- (g) if treatment necessitated by said special number call is complete, proceed to step (k);
- (h) if treatment necessitated by said special number call is not complete, in no particular order:
 - (1) determining whether a change in said treatment has occurred; and
 - (2) determining whether a change in said locus has occurred;
- (i) if a change has occurred in said treatment or in said locus, repeating steps (d) through (h);
- (j) if no change has occurred in said treatment or in said locus, repeating steps (g) through (h); and
- (k) terminating the method.

2. The method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit as recited in claim 1 wherein said network switching facility is one of a mobile switching center coupled with at least one of said unlicensed mobile access network and said radio access network, or an end office coupled with said public switched telephone network.

3. The method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit as recited in claim 1 wherein communication between said special number call receiving facility and a respective included function-focused answering unit may be established as at least one of voice communication and data communication.

4. The method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit as recited in claim 1 wherein which function-focused answering unit of said at least one function-focused answering unit is an included function-focused answering unit may be changed by said special number call receiving facility during said special number call.

5. The method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit as recited in claim 2 wherein communication between said special number call receiving facility and a respective included function-focused answering unit may be established as at least one of voice communication and data communication.

6. The method for dynamically coupling a special number call from a calling unit with at least one function-focused answering unit as recited in claim 5 wherein which function-focused answering unit of said at least one function-focused answering unit is an included function-focused answering unit may be changed by said special number call receiving facility during said special number call.

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